



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

TEXAS MAN SENTENCED TO 27 YEARS IN PRISON FOR SEX OFFENSE

URBANA, Ill. — United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois Rodger A. Heaton announced that a Texas man was sentenced today to 324 months in prison for traveling to Illinois to meet a minor female he had met through the Internet. The sentencing was the result of an investigation conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Decatur Police Department.

In addition to the 27-year prison sentence, Chief U.S. District Judge Michael P. McCuskey ordered that after his release, William H. Veazey, of Lewisville, Texas, be placed under supervised release for the remainder of his life.

In May 2005, Veazey pleaded guilty to the offenses, admitting that in November 2004 he engaged in Internet chat room conversations with an undercover Decatur, Illinois, police detective who identified himself as a 15-year-old girl from Illinois. From Nov. 20, 2004 to Dec. 30, 2004, during several on-line chat conversations, Veazey made numerous statements of a sexual nature to persuade the “girl” to engage in sexual activity. Veazey also made plans to travel to Decatur to meet her. On January 7, 2005, Veazey arrived in Decatur and was arrested by law enforcement agents.

Veazey committed the offenses after previously pleading guilty in 1995 to sexually abusing his minor stepdaughter. He was serving a 10-year term of probation at the time he committed the offenses that resulted in today’s sentencing. At sentencing, the government recommended that, given Veazey’s prior sex offense and the nature of the current crimes, the district court apply a zero-tolerance approach in imposing the recommended sentence of 27 years under advisory sentencing guidelines.

“Predators stalk the most vulnerable segments of our society,” said Gregory Archambeault, resident agent-in-charge of the ICE office in Springfield, Ill. “This case reveals the disturbing truth that some adults will go to great lengths to sexually exploit innocent children. ICE is committed to protecting those who cannot protect themselves, and the victims of child sex predators are at the top of that list.”

U.S. Attorney Rodger A. Heaton said, “The Internet creates new ways for sexual predators to lure unsuspecting and vulnerable children. The defendant in this case traveled hundreds of miles under the pretext that he was to meet a young girl in Illinois. Fortunately, no children were harmed in this instance; however, those who engage in this reprehensible behavior should expect to face severe penalties.”

Veazey’s conviction and sentencing were the result of an investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Decatur Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorney Timothy A. Bass prosecuted the case.

This case is part of Operation Predator, a nationwide ICE initiative to protect children from sexual predators, including those who travel overseas for sex with minors, Internet child pornographers, criminal alien sex offenders, and child sex traffickers. Since Operation Predator was launched in July 2003, ICE agents have arrested more than 6,500 individuals nationwide.

ICE encourages the reporting of suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. This hotline is staffed around the clock by investigators.

Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.